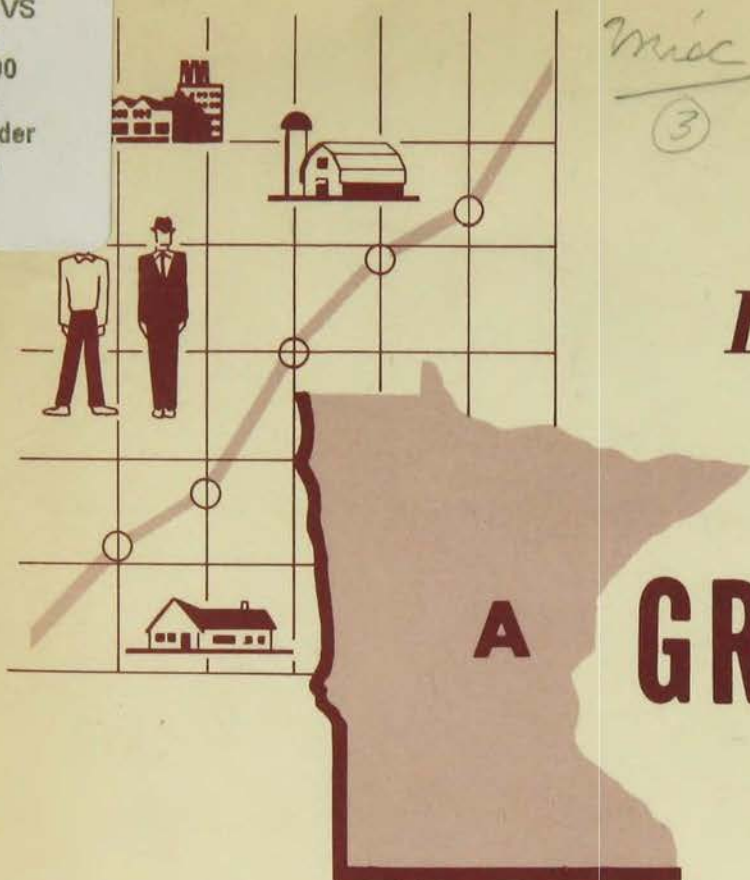


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*Facts for the Future-*

# A GROWING MINNESOTA

**Discussion Guides On**

*Goals for Minnesotans*

*Economic Growth--Today and Tomorrow*

*Minnesota's Human Resources*

*Our Changing Rural Economy*

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA  
*Agricultural Extension Service*  
U. S. DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

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Current information available from University of Minnesota Extension: <http://www.extension.umn.edu>.

# A Growing Minnesota

## DISCUSSION TIPS

### DISCUSSION GUIDES

**G**ROUP DISCUSSION helps you and your neighbors develop informed opinions. The enclosed, "A Growing Minnesota," Discussion Guides provide background information for discussion. Each Guide will contribute to the discussion and help you define problems, goals, solutions, and opinions. The Discussion Guides do these things for you:

1. Summarize the problem. The headline on the cover of each numbered Fact Guide indicates the topic. Some of the cover pages also have a short digest of situations, problems, etc.
2. Provide the facts. Each Discussion Guide includes the information you need for discussion of the specific topic.
3. Stimulate discussion. Discussion Guides pose questions that have an important bearing on problems and possible solutions affecting all Minnesotans.

Please remember—"A Growing Minnesota" discussion groups are informal. You are meeting with your neighbors and friends in a relaxed and sociable atmosphere.

#### **IF YOU ARE THE DISCUSSION LEADER OR HOST —**

1. Help people in your group become acquainted. Have them sit in a casual circle. Don't be formal as the leader or host—just be a friendly member of the group.

2. Be prompt—start the discussion at the agreed time. You may start the discussion by asking a question or reading a thought-stimulating statement from the Discussion Guide or other materials you may have selected. Guide the group to the next point, if too much time is being spent on one aspect of the problem.

3. Encourage each person to speak up, giving him or her free rein as long as the discussion is on the subject. Encourage ideas, friendly debate, healthy disagreement.

4. Avoid lags in the discussion. Eliminate wandering from the topic by injecting fresh questions or referring back to the main question. Politely interrupt the long-winded talkers so others can express themselves and maintain their interest.

5. Don't fret or be discouraged if the first one or two discussion meetings don't seem to go smoothly. As the group becomes better acquainted, individual responses will increase. You don't have to be an expert in leading or guiding informal discussion. If you'd like further information on discussion, ask your county agent for Communications Bulletin 14, "Discussion Traps: Avoid Them!"

#### **IF YOU ARE A DISCUSSANT OR PARTICIPANT —**

1. Read the designated Discussion Guide before you attend the discussion meeting. You will get more understanding from the conversations and give more of your own thinking to the group.

2. Say what you think at the meeting. That's why you have been invited. Make your ideas count to help yourself and others form opinions.

3. Listen to what others say. Keep an open mind, so you can make up your mind on facts.

4. Don't hesitate to disagree. But—keep controversy on a friendly basis. Don't insist that your view is the only sensible one. Be honest with yourself.

5. Don't make speeches. Keep your seat. Stay happy and relaxed. Let your attitude show that you are happy to be a member of the group.

6. Keep the discussion on the beam. Stick to the topic. Cite your own experiences if it will help the discussion. Quote articles you have read. Ask questions. Call for more explanation if you need it.

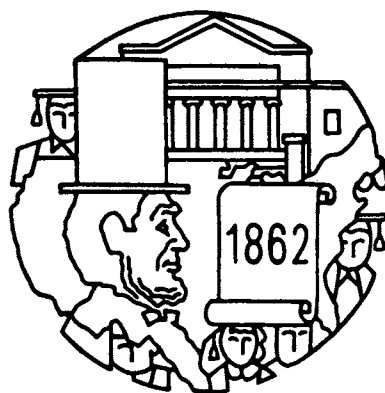
7. Speak up when you have something to say. This kind of meeting is for informal conversation. You're not in a classroom waiting to be recognized before reciting; you're among friends.

8. Apply the facts to situations in your own community. Help the others to see how the facts apply to your own neighborhood problems. Make everybody feel qualified to form opinions about these problems.

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